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UNCLAS MANAMA 001454

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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: URGENT DEMARCHE ON UNESCO CULTURAL DIVERSITY

REF: A. STATE 184292 B. MANAMA 1370

1. (U) In the absence of Foreign Minister Shaikh Khalid Al Khalifa, who was out of the country, Ambassador on October 8 passed ref a letter from Secretary Rice to MFA Assistant Undersecretary Shaikh Abdul Aziz Al Khalifa, who promised to pass the letter to the Minister upon his return. Shaikh Abdul Aziz expressed his personal view that, given the difference of opinions on the issue, it made sense to defer any decision.

2. (U) The Ambassador took advantage of a Ramadan call on the evening of October 8 on Minister of Education Majid Al Noaimi, who has prime responsibility for UNESCO matters, to press the issue further. Al Noaimi asked for a copy of the letter from Secretary Rice, and said he would discuss the issue with the Foreign Minister. He expressed sympathy with the USG position, urging that we lobby harder with other countries (the Ambassador stated that we were doing just that).

3. The Ambassador also passed on October 5 a letter from USTR Portman to Minister of Industry and Commerce Hassan Fakhro on the UNESCO issue.

MONROE